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INL honors 102 inventors at Annual Honors Banquet

IDAHO FALLS -- One hundred and two inventors were recognized for creating 38 patented inventions during 2008 at the 13th Annual Honors Banquet, held on Jan. 30 in Idaho Falls by U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory.

Peter Kong earned a special "Hall of Fame" spotlight for receiving 22 patents for his inventions, the first time an INL inventor has reached the 20 or more patent plateau. In addition, nine other inventors were honored for a lifetime of achievement for generating five or more patents during a career. Kong's research has focused on synthesizing complex chemical hydrides for hydrogen storage and innovative advanced industrial plasma reactor systems for nanoparticle materials production.

INL is the only national laboratory to recognize lifetime achievements for inventors who accrue 5, 10, 15 and 20 U.S. patented inventions. John Richardson was elevated to the level of 15 patented inventions this year, while four others – Kerry Klingler, Eric Peterson, John Svoboda and Bruce Wilding – graduated to the 10-patent level. Tom Luther, Christopher Orme, Edward Reber and Paul Tremblay also entered the "Hall of Fame" at the initial five-patent level.

INL also presented awards to winners of the Laboratory Director's Awards for Exceptional Achievement in engineering, science, early career achievement and lifetime achievement. These included David Thompson for engineering achievement, Vicki Thompson for scientific achievement, Leigh Martin for early career achievement and David Meikrantz for individual lifetime achievement in science and technology.

Established in 2002, the INL "Hall of Fame" provides public recognition and monetary awards based on levels of creativity. So far, one inventor, Kong, has been honored for 20 or more U.S. patents. Five inventors have been recognized for at least 15 U.S. patents, eight inventors for having at least 10 U.S. patents and 42 for at least five patents.

Since the "Hall of Fame's" establishment in 2002, INL has inducted 56 inventors who have amassed approximately 390 inventions and received \$400,000 in recognition as part of their lifetime achievement awards. These special awards are funded from licensing agreements that provide royalty income to the laboratory. Efforts to advance technologies created at INL and license them continue to pay dividends for the inventors and the national laboratory.

Among the 38 patents recognized this year, several addressed environmental challenges, processes and materials in energy research, national security, nuclear technologies, nanomaterials, plus science and industrial processing.

Patents issued to INL represent the laboratory's continued success applying scientific solutions to meet challenges of industry and government. Patents generated at INL benefit industries in such varied fields as chemical research, environmental cleanup and military personnel protection. The patents also have exceptional potential for application in health, manufacturing, national security, nuclear and fossil-fuel energy systems, renewable energy systems and many other areas.

Idaho National Laboratory is one of the Department of Energy's 10 multi-program national laboratories. The laboratory performs work in each of the strategic goal areas of DOE – energy, national security, science and environment. INL is the nation's leading center of nuclear energy research and development. Day-to-day management and operation of the laboratory is the responsibility of Battelle Energy Alliance.

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